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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2017 to March 2018

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 72/110 of 7 December 2017, provides a general overview of the activities undertaken and supported by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 72/110, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and the scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, it requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee on Decolonization and to continue their efforts to take measures through all of the media available, including publications, radio, television, the Internet and social media, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Public Information worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018.

II. 2017 Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

4. The Special Committee on Decolonization organized its annual regional seminar in Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, from 16 to 18 May 2017. The seminar was held on the occasion of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

5. The Department of Public Information deployed a press officer from its Meetings Coverage Section in New York to cover the seminar. The press officer worked closely with the Decolonization Unit, issuing daily press releases, which were disseminated through the Department's various communications platforms.

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

6. During the reporting period, the Department issued a total of 30 press releases in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings related to the work

of the United Nations on decolonization, including by the General Assembly and its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the Special Committee on Decolonization.

7. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit disseminated information about meetings on decolonization through media alerts and provided accreditation and liaison support to media representatives covering the meetings. The Media Documents Centre also distributed statements and other information related to those meetings.

United Nations website and social media

8. The Department maintained and updated the website on the United Nations and Decolonization (www.un.org/en/decolonization) in the six official languages, adding pages for the new sessions of the Special Committee and the annual regional seminar. During the period from January through December 2017, more than 195,000 users visited the website, an increase of 36.5 per cent from the previous year. Furthermore, the website registered over 366,000 sessions, an increase of 106 per cent from the previous year. The table below shows the United Nations decolonization website traffic in 2017, by language:

Language	*Sessions*	*Users*	*Page views*	*Pages per session*
Arabic	8 847	5 718	12 078	2.2
Chinese	7 376	3 894	10 090	3.19
English	206 168	99 165	272 300	2.78
French	26 789	15 992	35 360	2.38
Russian	8 786	5 749	11 332	2.09
Spanish	108 684	64 673	140 119	2.04
Total	**366 650**	**195 191**	**481 279**	**2.45**[a]

[a] Average.

9. Activities and issues related to decolonization were also highlighted through the "Global Issues" web page of the www.un.org website (http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/decolonization/).

10. The Department's multilingual social media accounts promoted issues related to decolonization, including news updates and the history of the Trusteeship Council. They also helped in driving traffic to the decolonization web page on the Organization's main website and to other related web pages and events.

United Nations News

11. The Department's multimedia United Nations News operation, in the six official languages, plus Kiswahili and Portuguese, provided news and feature coverage of activities, events and issues related to decolonization and to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, which was disseminated to global audiences through the Internet, social media platforms, media partners and online news aggregators.

12. United Nations News coverage spanned a wide range of developments related to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. These included, for example, the appointment of Horst Köhler as the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, the situation in Guerguerat and humanitarian aid to Sahrawi refugees. United Nations News also reported on each phase of recovery following the powerful category 5 hurricanes Irma and Maria, which hit the Caribbean region in September, including an interview with the Director of the Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies for the Turks and Caicos Islands, Virginia Clerveaux. Other United Nations News coverage included the 2017 Caribbean Regional Seminar on Decolonization, the opening of the 2018 session of the Special Committee on Decolonization in February 2018, and issues related to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). The Department of Public Information press release issued on 22 February to mark the opening of the 2018 session of the Special Committee highlighted the statement of the Secretary-General, in which he noted that decolonization had been a central aspect of his previous political life, and in which he expressed solidarity with those Non-Self-Governing Territories which had been affected by hurricanes in the past year. The Secretary-General followed up his statement with a personal tweet on the occasion of the 2018 session of the Special Committee.

13. The United Nations Television News and Facilities Unit covered three formal open meetings of the General Assembly and the Special Committee. The United Nations webcast website provided live and on-demand webcast coverage of United Nations meetings and events related to decolonization issues. During the period from April 2017 to February 2018, a total of 28 videos on decolonization were made available on the United Nations Web TV website. The United Nations Photo Unit also covered the meetings of the Special Committee held in June 2017 and February 2018 and disseminated its photos through its website.

IV. Visitors Services

14. The issue of decolonization was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters in New York. In the Trusteeship Council Chamber, tour guides explained the historical process of decolonization, including the role played by the Trusteeship Council and the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization in the light of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. During the reporting period, more than 245,000 visitors took a guided tour at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

15. The Visitors Services in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna also shared informational materials and conducted briefings on decolonization, including on the roles of the Trusteeship Council, the Special Committee and the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, as part of the United Nations guided tours programme. The programme reached a total of 162,200 visitors in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna.

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

16. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library published two new research guides relating to decolonization during the reporting period: one on the Trusteeship Council (http://research.un.org/en/docs/tc) and the other on decolonization

(http://research.un.org/en/docs/decolonization). These two guides form part of the United Nations documentation research guide series, which is available online to anyone wishing to learn more about these topics. The publication of the Trusteeship Council guide means that a research guide is now available for each of the major United Nations organs. The publication of these new guides was also promoted through the official twitter account of the Library, @UNLibrary.

17. The Library continued to provide research and information services on an ongoing basis. In particular, the Library assisted the Office of Legal Affairs in researching and digitizing numerous documents for the dossier of documents submitted by the Secretariat to the International Court of Justice in relation to the request by the General Assembly for an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, as contained in resolution 71/292 of 22 June 2017. As a result, 279 historic United Nations documents relating to the issue are now publicly available to researchers around the world through the Official Document System.

18. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to digitize important United Nations documents and make them available through the Official Document System and the United Nations Digital Library. During the reporting period, 21,200 documents (257,600 pages) were digitized, including 2,500 official records of the Trusteeship Council.

19. In the past year, the Library analysed some 9,000 United Nations documents and publications, including retrospective work done to enable the curation of documents of the Trusteeship Council, as well as documents connected to other United Nations bodies on the topic of decolonization. Three volumes of the Index to Proceedings of the Security Council (seventy-first year), United Nations Economic and Social Council (2016 session) and the General Assembly (seventieth session) were completed and posted on United Nations websites. In addition, the Library continues to update the index to the database that facilitates the discovery of speeches before the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Economic and Social Council on the topic of decolonization. These bibliographic and analytical works allow for access by thematic and geographical subject and easy discovery of the documents via the Library's online services.

VI. United Nations publications

20. During the reporting period, the Department published volume 67 (2013) of the Yearbook of the United Nations and continued to work on subsequent volumes. With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those related to decolonization, the Yearbook presented the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations Yearbook Twitter account also featured historical items related to decolonization.

VII. United Nations Intranet, iSeek

21. The United Nations Intranet, iSeek, published a story on the two above-mentioned Dag Hammarskjöld Library research guides: in English, https://iseek.un.org/

article/explore-new-trusteeship-council-decolonization-research-guides; and in French, https://iseek.un.org/fr/article/conseil-de-tutelle-deux-guides-pour-explorer-ses-activites.

VIII. United Nations information centres and services

22. The global network of 59 active United Nations information centres organized activities to raise awareness of the work of the Organization on issues related to decolonization, including the ongoing Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the United Nations trusteeship system and the role played by the Trusteeship Council. For example, 400 young people from schools across India, along with students from Afghanistan, Brazil, China, Egypt, Nepal, the Russian Federation, South Sudan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, simulated and learned about the work of the Special Committee at a January 2018 Model United Nations event at Amity University in Uttar Pradesh (India). The event was jointly organized by the United Nations Information Centre in New Delhi and Amity University.

IX. Conclusions

23. The Department of Public Information, as the public voice of the Organization, continues to work together with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs in disseminating information about decolonization and promoting the objectives of the ongoing Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Using diverse communications and outreach tools, the Department works to promote the need for the immediate and full implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and highlights the work of the Special Committee as the intergovernmental body exclusively devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda.